



United States Senate

NEWS RELEASE

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Craig (202) 224-8078
Feinstein (202) 224-9629

Senate Approves Feinstein-Craig Resolution to Designate the Week of March 12-17 as “National Safe Place Week”

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Senate approved last night a resolution sponsored by U.S. Senators Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., and Larry Craig, R-Idaho, and a bipartisan group of 13 other senators that would designate the week of March 12-17, 2007 as “National Safe Place Week.”

The Safe Place program is a public-private partnership that has been serving at-risk youth since 1983 in communities across the country.

The resolution approved last night by the Senate recognizes the participating businesses, community organizations, youth service agencies and volunteers that are part of the YMCA National Safe Place program and work for the safety and well being of at-risk youth.

This year marks the fourth year that Senators Feinstein and Craig have sponsored, and the Senate has passed, a resolution designating a “National Safe Place Week.”

“The National Safe Place program provides shelter to youngsters in need, and I am honored to be a part of the effort to commend it. Youth today face growing pressures in their daily lives at school, at home, and in the community. For some, problems include abuse or neglect at home, drug or alcohol addictions of family members and friends, trouble at school or dangerous situations on a date,” Senator Feinstein said. **“I am encouraged by the National Safe Place Program’s positive impact on communities throughout the nation, and I hope that more communities will choose to participate in this innovative program.”**

“The well-being of our children has always been a number one priority in Idaho communities. Project Safe Place is proof of that commitment, providing youth a safe and secure place to turn to in a crisis. The goal of this week is to raise awareness of the program's success and recognize individuals who contribute their time and effort to the success of Project Safe Place,” Senator Craig said.

Cosponsors of the resolution included: Senators Evan Bayh (D-Ind.), Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.), Jim Bunning (R-Ky.), Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-N.Y.), Thad Cochran (R.-Miss.), Mike Crapo (R-Idaho), Christopher Dodd (D-Conn.), Richard Durbin (D-Ill.), Feingold (D-Wis.), Blanche Lincoln (D-Ark.), Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska), and Ken Salazar (D-Colo.).

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Background

Over the past 24 years, the National Safe Place program has provided immediate help to more than 200,000 youth in crisis at nearly 16,000 Safe Place locations and with counseling by phone.

This important program is currently operated by 140 agencies serving 700 communities in 40 states – bringing together the private and public sector to reach out and help at-risk youth who might be neglected, abused, threatened or in unsafe situations.

In California, there are nine designated Safe Place programs with 1,738 Safe Place sites located in over 65 communities which have served more than 5,000 youth.

National Safe Place sites include fast food restaurants, convenience stores, fire stations, schools, libraries, office buildings or even a city bus and are marked by large, yellow Safe Place signs displayed prominently in front windows. Any youth can walk into a Safe Place site and receive immediate help from a trained volunteer, and further help from a Safe Place staff person who can provide counseling, residential assistance or professional referrals, as needed.